

Portland versus Prohibition.

The Hon. Neal Dow in an able article in *The Independent* of Feb. 23rd, thus answers those who utter and adopt the falsehood—"Prohibition has failed everywhere."

The truth is, that Prohibition has failed nowhere; that is, the result of it wherever it has been adopted has been to diminish the volume of the liquor traffic, and in a great many prohibitory districts it has been, and is entirely suppressed.

Before the adoption by Maine in 1851 of the policy of prohibition, the liquor traffic was everywhere in the state wholesale and retail. There was no village so small, no rural neighborhood so remote and insignificant that the rumrunner did not find it and establish a rum-grocery there. Everywhere upon the lines of our highways throughout the state, there were roadside rum-shops. In a great many places there were wells and pumps and watering troughs for the refreshment of cattle, and there was sure to be near it a shanty where rum was kept for travelers. Many and many a time I have seen the rumrunner fetch out to the wagon or carriage or equestrian, the inevitable glass of rum, while the oxen or horses were taking water. The women and children would share in the liquor whatever it was. There were many distilleries in the state in those days, converting molasses into rum, potatoes into whiskey and elder into brandy, called "apple-jack." Now there is not a distillery or a brewery in the state, and nowhere within its territory will the traveler see any sign or other indication of liquor-selling. In more than three-fourths of our territory containing far more than three-fourths of our population the grog-shops are practically unknown, so that an entire generation has grown up there never having seen one.



In proportion to population, Maine's share of the national drink-bill would be now about thirteen million dollars, but one million will more than cover the cost of all the liquor smuggled into the state and sold in violation of law. We save annually more than twelve million dollars directly, and an equal sum indirectly as the result of prohibition, which but for the Maine Law would be spent, lost and wasted in drink. In those days, Maine was said to be the poorest state in the Union, but now it is one of the most prosperous. Signs of thrift and poverty were seen everywhere in neglected, shabby houses, barns, farms, school houses, meeting houses, but now such indications of the saloon and the drink habit are seen nowhere. John Bright said: "If the evil coming to the community from intemperance could be put away, England could not be recognized as the same country." Precisely that has happened to Maine. Some time since a stranger sat by my side in a railway car on our way to Boston. He knew me and said: "I am a native of Maine. Twenty-five years ago I went to Minnesota, where I now live. I am now in Maine for the first time, and the change is so great in everything I see, that I did not recognize it as the same. No more tumble-down houses with old hats and rags in the windows instead of glass, no more dilapidated barns and shabby cattle, no more miserable school-houses and meeting-houses. Everything now is neat and in good repair indicating industry and thrift." This is literally true. Maine is now so changed from what it was in the old rum-time, that it cannot be recognized as the same.

If this be true of Maine, how can it be possible that a report can go out from it, however untrue, that Prohibition here is a failure and that no benefit to the state results from it? It is even said by many intelligent men and in many prominent newspapers that as much liquor is now sold in Maine as there was before the advent of Prohibition. Observe, that these affirmations are never made by Maine men, they come from outsiders, whether originating or not in the "Literary Fund" of the Liquor League, I do not know. But when called upon for reasons, these people say: "Look at Portland and Bangor where the prohibitory law is not enforced!"

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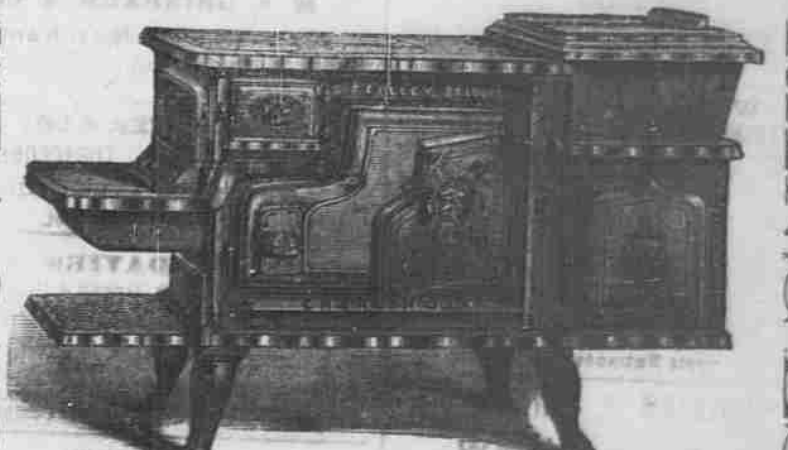
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